

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

#4
Letter

Applicant : Chris A. Hamilton
Title of Invention : IMPROVED CONTROL OF
VIDEOCONFERENCING USING
ACTIVITY DETECTION

Assistant Commissioner for Patents
Washington, DC 20231

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

SIR:

This application is a continuation of U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/098,911. The six-month date for response to the outstanding Office Action expires today, and a Petition for a Three-Month Extension of Time is enclosed herewith.

All of the claims have been amended. The newly amended claims call for the speaker to be identified by the use of a combination of image processing and voice activity detection. This technique is fully described at page 5 of the present application.

Applicant is in the process of translating the Japanese prior art relied upon in the parent case. The abstract portion, which is in English, does not appear to disclose this technique and in fact, specifically indicates that the presence or absence of speech is identified "according to the voice level of the conference participant." Such a technique could fail based upon loud ambient noise, but applicant's invention of utilizing the additional step of image processing with speech activity detection prevents such a failure.

Applicant submits that it would not in any way be obvious to combine the teachings of the Ogata reference with Zhou, U.S. Patent No. 5,512,939. Specifically, Zhou dynamically allocates image encoding bandwidth to different portions of the signal, increasing the resolution of the lips

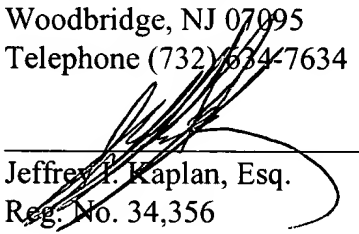
when the person is speaking. However, Zhou in no way deals with videoconferencing or with distinguishing among various conference participants with different lip movements. Instead, Zhou simply enhances portions of the video screen with the moving lips. It is submitted that there is no suggestion in either of the references to change the display and designate the speaker by combining both an audio and video signal to drive a video generator to generate a border around the speaker's image. This combination is neither suggested nor disclosed in either of the references at issue, and it is submitted that applicant's claims are thus patentable.

The Examiner is authorized to deduct any additional fees believed due from Deposit Account No. 11-0223.

Respectfully submitted,

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